**Latvian National Communists. Their activities and fall**

The changes which occurred in the Soviet Union after Mr Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev came to power and the internal opposition which came into being in the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Latvia as an effect of the brutal post-war Sovietisation of the Latvian republic, resulted in the take-over of power in the Socialist Republic of Latvia by a group of reformers led by Mr Edvards Berklavs. In their actions, they attempted to defend the republic’s interest. For three years (1956–1959), the ‘Berklavists’, described as ‘national Latvian communists’ brought about changes in the processes unfavourable to the republic, such as a reduction of the number of Russian-speaking immigrants, limits to the settling of retired military personnel, primarily in Riga, the capital of Latvia, and regulations aimed at protecting the Latvian language and culture. The party reformers planned to take over the ever larger number of industry sectors controlled by the republican departments, which coincided with the reform of the economic administration structure initiated by Khrushchev, and they partly succeeded. The momentum of the suggested changes, which might have jeopardised the Soviet Union’s cohesion, particularly in the economic dimension, the discontent of the Russian-speaking section of society and the opposition on the part of a strong faction inside the very Communist Party of Latvia itself, resulted in the Latvian national communists’ being routed after only three years in power. The removal from positions of authority and the purges in the Communist Party of Latvia carried out after a Stalinist politician, Arvids Pelse, had taken power, as well as the repressions against those who were suspected of ‘nationalist deviation’, resulted in the slowing down Latvia’s economic development, the further Russification of the republic and the stamping out of independence movements in Latvia until the second half of the 1980s.